

Winter 1991

Black Alumni Chronicle, Winter 1991

University of Dayton

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Black Alumni CHRONICLE

University of Dayton

Winter 1991

Students at Cincinnati's Purcell Marian High School are learning about cultural diversity and African-American history from UD educators.

"The African-American Studies Program" was launched this spring when Debra Moore, director of minority student affairs, spoke to Purcell Marian students about blacks in higher education.

Each month, UD faculty and community leaders travel to Cincinnati to present workshops. African-American literature and a "Meeting of the Minds" of prominent persons in black history have been among the sessions presented. In January, music professor Donna Cox, director of UD's Ebony Heritage Singers, will give a presentation on the evolution of Gospel music. The high-schoolers have also come to Dayton for a leadership conference on campus and will be back

in January for UD's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

Jan Rich, Purcell Marian's director of development and recruitment, said it's difficult for schools to hire a host of teachers with expertise in African-American studies. The UD program is "a way of bringing that expertise into the school. We were searching for a way to live up to our responsibility to our African-American students," she said. Thirty-six percent of Purcell Marian's student population is black.

UD alumni are also involved in the program. Kenny Littlejohn, a 1987 electrical engineering graduate, and his four brothers have formed a Gospel singing group which will prepare Purcell Marian's choir for a concert.

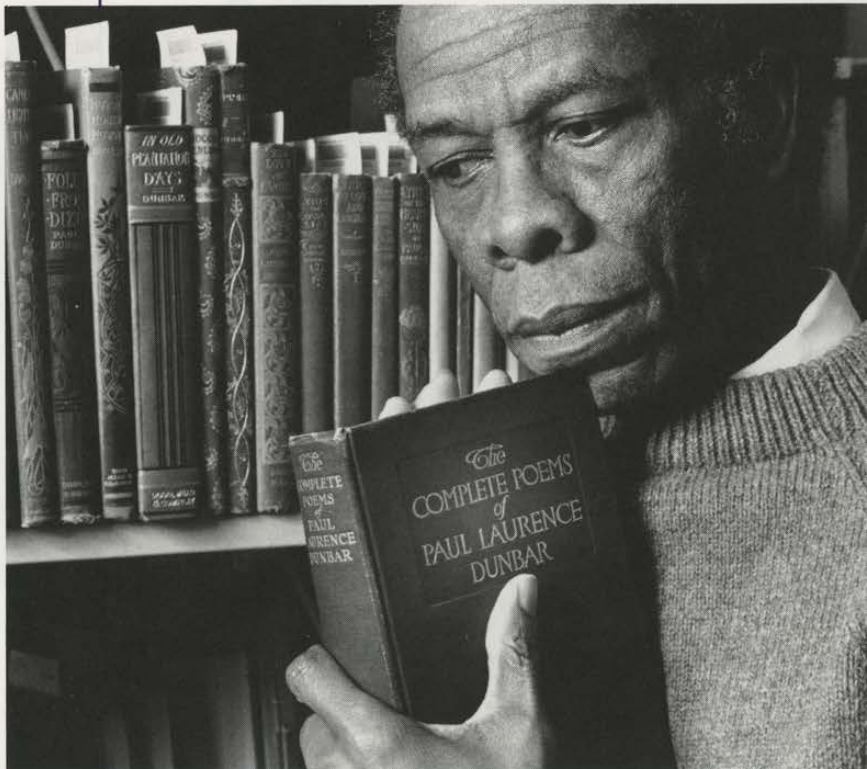
The five Littlejohn siblings have been bringing together teens from Dayton-area churches for the last eight years for a week of intense choir practice capped off by a musical performance.

The "musical fellowship" has brought together as many as 350 young people to sing contemporary and traditional Gospel music.

Littlejohn said the group's goal is for youngsters to "bring back to their own church" the spirit that captures the singers during practice. "We want them to show the community there are some young people doing something positive in the name of the Lord."

Littlejohn, an engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base who's pursuing his master's in computer science at UD, said, "Anytime I can work with a group of young people, I count it a privilege." ■

Herbert Woodward Martin, UD English professor and poet-in-residence, will dress up and "borrow" the voice of Paul Laurence Dunbar to bring the verse of the Dayton poet to life for Purcell Marian students. A portion of Martin's popular one-man show, complete with a history of Dunbar's life, will soon be available for use in elementary schools. The video is expected to premiere in Dayton in February during Black History Month.



'People who are truly of faith must put it into action.
...We're worse off now than in the '60s. We need to
stand up to the injustices done.'

—The Rev. Michael Pfleger

"The Challenge: Live His Dream"

will be the theme of a celebration planned by UD's office of minority student affairs honoring the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The Rev. Michael Pfleger, who gained national attention for his work as a member of the drug-busting "God Squad" in Chicago in 1989, will speak at a prayer breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 14, in the Kennedy Union Ballroom.

Pfleger, 42, is the white pastor of St. Sabina, a virtually all-black church on the tough South Side of Chicago. Pfleger teamed with fellow priest George Clements, who received an honorary degree from UD last April, to form the "God Squad" in the spring of 1989. The men led their parishioners on marches and boycotts against local retailers who sold drug paraphernalia, which were eventually banned by state law.

"The 'God Squad' is about empowering folks to take charge of their neighborhoods themselves without waiting for governmental intervention," Pfleger said.

Pfleger has worked at St. Sabina for the past 17 years. During that time he has led many successful protests, despite often being arrested. He rallied against the G. Heileman Brewing Co. for creating a potent malt liquor and marketing it toward young black men, and smeared paint across alcohol and tobacco billboards which he said were "saturated" in the black and Hispanic communities of the South Side. The brewery eventually discontinued "PowerMaster" and the number of billboards has dropped from 118 to 40.

"People who are truly of faith must put it into action," Pfleger said. "In my opinion, we're

worse off now than in the '60s. We need to stand up to injustices done."

Currently Pfleger is organizing a boycott of the Chicago public transportation system. The suburban transportation system has a larger budget than the city transportation system. Officials tried to make up for the difference by cutting services and raising fares for only the city system.

"The mayor and the governor need to know that the people won't be pawns in their political games," Pfleger said. "I think we're going to see results."

Pfleger bases many of his actions on the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. "Dr. King is probably one of the greatest mentors of my life," he said. "He offered us a roadmap for dealing with the issues that are destroying our society, so I spend a lot of my time teaching and preaching his agenda."

The King family has visited St. Sabina, and Pfleger is involved in the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change in Atlanta.

"Dr. King's life was rooted in Scripture," Pfleger said. "Unless you have that rootedness, you fail." ■



The Most Rev. Moses Anderson, auxiliary bishop of Detroit, and a former guest speaker at the University of Dayton, will return to campus for a special program honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16, in the Immaculate Conception Chapel. The program will also feature a performance by the Ebony Heritage Singers. A reception will follow in the Kennedy Union Torch Lounge. ■

Charity Adams Earley, who fought against race and gender biases long before they exploded into headlines,

will be awarded the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters from UD at its Dec. 21 commencement exercises.



In addition to decades of service to the Dayton community, Earley holds the distinction of being the first black to be commissioned an officer in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, later renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

A native of North Carolina, Earley holds a bachelor's degree from Wilberforce University and a master's degree from Ohio State University. When the Women's

Army Auxiliary Corps was formed in 1942, Earley was recommended by Wilberforce's dean of women for officer candidate school. Before leaving military service in 1946, she was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and was the second-highest-ranking officer in the WAC.

Earley's 1989 book, *One Woman's Army: A Black Officer Remembers the WAC*, chronicles those experiences because, as she wrote: "In another generation young black women who join the military will have scant record of their predecessors who fought on the two fronts of discrimination — segregation and reluctant acceptance by males." In fighting discrimination, she repeatedly placed her military career in jeopardy. Once, when informed of a plan to create a Negro Regiment for her to command, she indicated she would be willing to face court martial rather than obey an order to command a regiment that would segregate the WAC.

During the past four decades, Earley's community activities have been legion. She has been a member of the board of trustees of Sinclair Community College, the board of directors of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the national board of governors of the American Red Cross. She also established the Black Leadership Program in Dayton. ■



Student successes were toasted, and prospective students were welcomed at the Soul Food Dinner Nov. 9. Highlights of the cultural potpourri included a one-woman performance of African-American poetry and prose by actress Schyleen Qualls.

Alumni Profiles



"Ted" Easler '73

Vice President,
University Advancement
Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala.

"If historically black colleges and universities are going to succeed, if we're going to thrive, we have to have more confidence in our ability to generate dollars, and I mean big dollars," says J. Edward "Ted" Easler II.

There's plenty of confidence fueling Tuskegee's recently launched \$150 million capital campaign. "It's the first time a historically black college is embarking on a campaign of this magnitude. It's a bold statement, but it's a necessary statement," says Easler, who started in fund raising at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta. He has since served as director of resource development for the southeast region of Boys Clubs of America and as a regional director for the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation's \$400 million campaign.

Easler came to UD as a Ford Urban Fellow to pursue a master's in public administration after earning a bachelor's degree in urban studies at Cleveland State University, where in 1990 he was named a distinguished alumnus.

Easler says the advancement profession "is a wonderful opportunity for the right individual," but notes that "blacks have been historically excluded at majority institutions. ... As long as you have decision-makers who feel that wealthy friends or alumni would not react positively to a black fund-raiser calling on them, it precludes any opportunity to make real headway."

"If we are serious about managing diversity on our campuses," he recently wrote in a professional journal, "we are going to have to create a new institutional climate that strongly suggests that certain actions and stereotypical references are not to be tolerated. We are going to have to change people ... or fire them."



Linda Bates Parker '65

Career Development and Placement
Center Director
University of Cincinnati

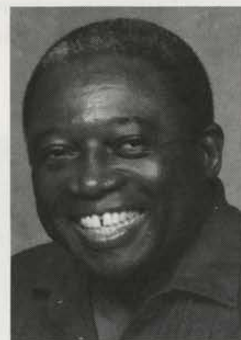
"I use the image of tackling an elephant to

help describe the size of the issue when dealing with racial problems," says Linda Bates Parker, founder of the Racial Awareness Program (RAP) at the University of Cincinnati.

Founded in 1986, RAP is committed to the "dialogue, challenge, debate and discovery" of racial issues, Parker said. Students selected for RAP attend lectures and retreats to help them understand the influences behind racism and stereotypes. They also host sessions for faculty and student groups on racial diversity.

A UD group in the '60s helped to focus her attention on racial issues. "The group Dialogue was formed to help minimize discrimination and to give support to students," she said. "It shows just how far we've not come, even with all of our efforts. It also shows that it takes committed individuals to overcome the prejudice that we all grow up with."

UD's "Racial Awareness: A Cooperative Effort" program, along with several other university and high school racial diversity programs, have been developed due to the success of RAP, she said.



Percy Vera '63, '66

Professor of economics
and department chair
Sinclair Community
College, Dayton

"In an economy like this, you have to get as good an education as you possibly can. And you have to stick with it. You can't keep dropping in and dropping

out," says Percy Vera, who has taught for 26 years at Sinclair Community College. "Be certain of the career you're pursuing," Vera tells students. "Management, particularly MIS — management information systems, and accounting will be the careers of the future."

Words of encouragement come easily to Vera, who remembers when "there weren't any black role models" at UD, and "you had to seek people out to feel welcome." So he sought out William Hoben, former dean of the School of Business, Father Norbert Burns, S.M., of religious studies and UD alumnus Lloyd Lewis, and "they

This issue
of the *Black
Alumni
Chronicle*
focuses on
alumni in
education.

befriended me and mentored me," he said.

"The kinds of changes I've seen at UD are quite healthy," Vera said, noting greater efforts to enroll and retain minority students. UD's office for minority student affairs "helps students feel welcome and included. ... Students are constantly encouraged to do well, get an education and remember where they came from."

He's applied that advice to his own life. In addition to working toward his doctorate and reviewing and revising three major economic texts, he actively serves the church and community. A member of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Education Commission and the board of directors of the Other Place, a daytime drop-in center for homeless people, Vera has served on the Good Samaritan Hospital Mental Health Advisory Board and the United Way Board. He served for six years on the board of Catholic Social Services, including a term as president. ■

Keith Cosby '78

Physical education teacher
Belle Haven Elementary School, Dayton

Elementary school students "come with an open mind, are willing to learn and are more receptive to new ideas" says Keith Cosby, one of a small number of black males teaching at the elementary level in Dayton.

Physical education is necessary, he says, because it's important to know how the body works and what the body can do. "I like the idea that everyone can be a winner."

For more than five years, Cosby was the activities director of the National Youth Sports Program at UD. Funded through the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Department of Health and Human Services, the program aims to "address the needs of low-income and disadvantaged children," Cosby says.

The program has two goals: to bring the children to campus and give them instruction in sports activity and to serve as an enrichment program with sessions on topics such as alcohol abuse, careers and nutrition.

"Most of these kids can't afford to go to a summer

sports program," Cosby says. "The NYSP offers excellent instruction at no cost."

UD was rated in the top 10 of the 140 NYSP programs in the nation for four of the years that Cosby was involved. Now one of 15 evaluators for the NYSP, Cosby visits sites throughout the country to see how each program runs and if it meets the 89 guidelines outlined by the NYSP. ■

Amie Revere '85

Associate professor of
counselor education
University of Dayton

Why do other "single-issue schools" like Catholic and Montessori ones thrive and black male academies struggle?



Amie Revere and an Ohio State University colleague are studying black male academies around the country to try to find the answer. "They tend to be seen as resegregation. I fail to see why they're so controversial when we've had single-issue schools for so long," says Revere, who holds a doctorate and two master's degrees — one from UD — in education. "We're losing an inordinate amount of youngsters to crime and drugs. If we don't do something early with intervention programs, there will be dire consequences later on. We need to look at the positives, not the negatives of these schools."

Revere is used to looking at the positives. One of 12 children growing up in a single-parent home in East St. Louis, Ill., she and nine of her brothers and sisters finished college. As a child, Revere remembers constantly reading and giving book reports at a "home study club" formed by her school-teacher aunt, Lilly Freeman, who now has an elementary school named after her in East St. Louis. "We have a thirst for knowledge in my family," she says, "and we helped each other."

During a 35-year career in education, Revere has done everything from teaching health and physical education in the Cleveland Public Schools to serving as an assistant superintendent of the Jefferson Township School District to conducting UD courses and workshops around the state. One day she hopes to write a history book profiling blacks in educational leadership. ■

Professor Donna Cox will lead an *Ebony Heritage Singers Music Workshop* in February.



Student Profiles



Adrian Morgan

Major:
Criminal Justice

Hometown:
Rochester, N.Y.

Year: Sophomore

Adrian Morgan, co-editor of *Black Perspective*, describes his work with the publication as "totally just a hobby." He really wants to be a police officer.


"I just like to help people, it's the helping that I find most enjoyable. And also that truth and justice thing. I liked cartoons when I was a kid, superhero things," Morgan said.

His interest in journalism began when he met the editors of *Black Perspective* during a weekend program at UD to recruit prospective black students. Last year Morgan wrote for the newspaper and this year became co-editor with Valerie Colbert.

"*Black Perspective* is ... a newspaper with a lot of potential," Morgan said. "I want to stay with it until I graduate to try to give it a good foundation so that it can reach some credibility. We always say we want to be comparable to the *Flyer News*," Morgan said, jokingly. "It's our big, huge, underlying Campus 2000 goal for *Black Perspective*."

Morgan wants *Black Perspective* to become a paper "that is expected and seen frequently," with a reliable staff and writers who continue to

focus on issues concerning African-American students.

Morgan also is a resident assistant in Kettering Hall, a member of Hall Council and involved with the Rape Awareness and Student Life Council programs on campus. "I have to have something to occupy my time," he said. "I bore easily I guess." 



Angeleta Jones

Major: Industrial
Engineering Technology

Hometown: Dayton

Year: Senior

Keeping busy is no problem for Angeleta Jones, UD student chapter president of the Institute of Industrial Engineers and treasurer of the National

Society of Black Engineers.

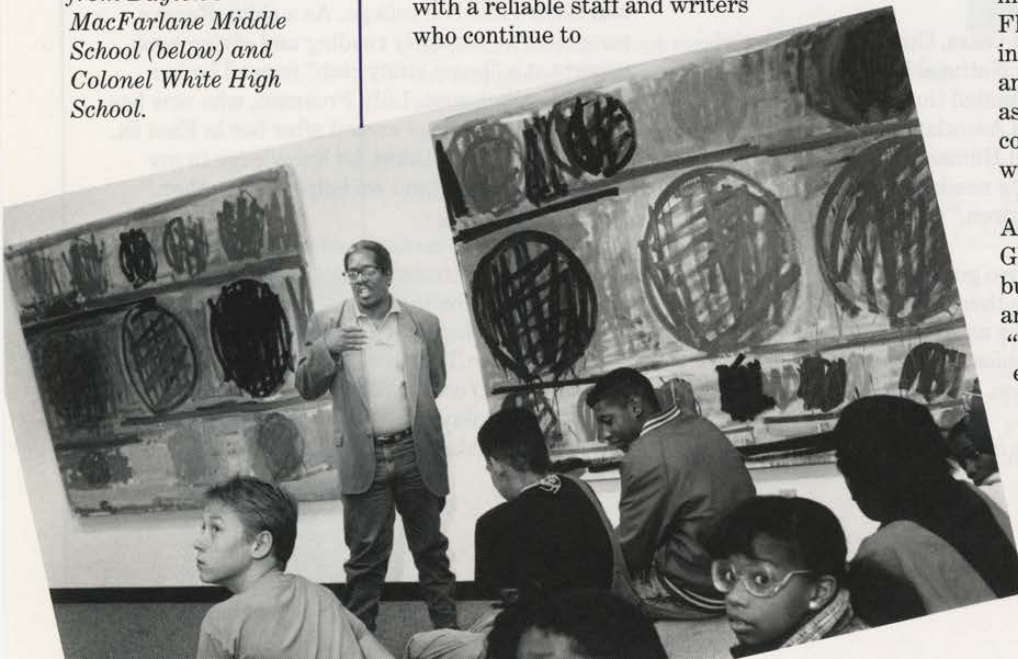
For the last three summers, Jones has interned at General Motors Delco Moraine Division in Dayton, working first in quality analysis, then purchasing and finally as a manufacturing supervisor of 25 employees. "When I started working at GM and I actually took some of the things I learned from school and applied them to my job, I could tell it was worthwhile because it blended really well," she said.

Jones, who also enjoys singing, dancing and modeling, is a new member of the UD Flyerettes. A former counselor for UD's Women in Engineering program, she has also served as an orientation leader for incoming students and as co-chair of the Christmas on Campus adoption committee, matching youngsters from Dayton with UD student hosts.

After graduation in April, Jones hopes to work at GM and move up the ladder. "Maybe I'll become a buyer, because I like working with the suppliers and working out quality problems," she said. "Then, maybe sales, and I'm thinking about environmental engineering sometime in the future."

One of Jones' life goals is to have her own

"Paintings about people feeling better about themselves" is how nationally known artist Stanley Whitney described his abstract oils on canvas that were exhibited in UD's Rike Center Gallery in October. Whitney, who lectured and worked with UD students, also presented workshop sessions for students from Dayton's MacFarlane Middle School (below) and Colonel White High School.



company. "I don't know what I want to produce or if I want to produce anything. ... I love dancing and I wouldn't mind having a dance studio, but that's far from engineering. We have to see how it goes." ■



Mark Sorrells

Major: Electrical engineering

Hometown: Dayton

Year: Senior

When Mark Sorrells applied to the University of Cincinnati's engineering school, he was told other students "looked better on paper" and he should apply to technical school.

Now, after studying electrical engineering at the University of Dayton, interning with NASA, tutoring other students and performing in a theater workshop, Sorrells can look back at that experience and laugh.

"I wouldn't trade my education at UD for the world," said Sorrells, a graduate of Belmont High School in Dayton. Coming to UD was difficult at first, he said. "I was really leery and scared. But I knew UD had a good engineering program. I gave it the best I could give it."

Sorrells' efforts enabled him to intern for four sessions with NASA in Cleveland, where he designed a circuit to measure force on the wheels of planes as they accelerated.

He also took part in a theater workshop with Sheila Ramsey of Dayton's Muse Machine and performed two poems on stage. "It was really good for me," Sorrells said. "As an engineer you have to give presentations, and you have to be able to express yourself."

Sorrells is an active member of the National Society of Black Engineers, through which he began tutoring other students, and a member of the Flyer Ham Radio Club. After graduating in December 1991, he hopes to either get a job in electrical communications or go to graduate school.

"UD gave me confidence I haven't had. I've

grown in ways I didn't expect, both academically and socially." ■



Tobette Pleasant '89

Major: Social agency counseling

Hometown: Dayton

Year: Graduate student

"In three years, I've seen many changes in the children," says

Tobette Pleasant, graduate assistant on the Lady Flyers basketball coaching staff.

She's not talking about the Dayton players, but about kids in the Montgomery County Juvenile Court system, the 9- to 17-year-old runaways, drug dealers and prostitutes she's counseled in her three summers of working with the courts.

Pleasant joined the basketball staff in 1990 after playing professional basketball for a year in Germany. A knee injury brought the two-time MVP and the first Lady Flyer named to the First-Team All-Midwestern Collegiate Conference Team back to Dayton to stay.

Pleasant, who's pursuing her master's in social agency counseling, works with the UD post players, scouts opponents and advises team members on what to expect on the court. During the summer, she listens to stories from youngsters in trouble with the law, then advises kids in her own Dayton neighborhood on what to expect if they make those same mistakes.

"After attending UD, I could see how kids in my neighborhood had changed," Pleasant said. "My nieces and nephews are growing up, and I could see how their peers influenced them. So I bring some of [my experiences] home to my nieces and nephews and to the kids in the neighborhood."

A member of the Flyers' 1,000 point club, Pleasant ranks ninth on the UD all-time scoring list with 1,308 points. ■

Events Calendar

8

Black History Month 1992 Celebration

Jan. 31

Happy Hour for alumni, faculty and staff featuring the Jazz Patrol combo, 4:30-8 p.m., Kennedy Union Pub. No charge, but reservations are requested by Monday, Jan. 27. Call (513) 229-3634.

Feb. 2

Multi-cultural Liturgy in the African-American tradition, 8:30 p.m., Immaculate Conception Chapel. Celebrant: The Rev. Joseph Davis, S.M.

Feb. 3

Haki R. Madhubuti, editor of the Third World Press and director of the Institute of Positive Education in Chicago, will speak at 7 p.m. in the Kennedy Union Ballroom.

Feb. 12

Protestant Worship Service conducted by the Rev. Keith Kitchen, 7 p.m., Immaculate Conception Chapel.

Feb. 21-22

Ebony Heritage Singers Music Workshop. Call Donna Cox, assistant professor of music, at (513) 229-3946 for information.

Feb. 23

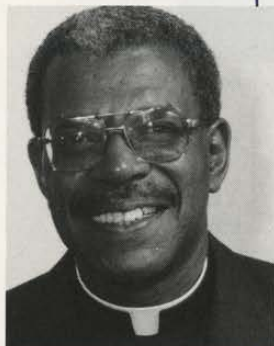
Gospel Music Festival, 3 p.m., Kennedy Union Boll Theatre.

Feb. 28

UD Arts Series presents jazz violinist Sonya Robinson, 8 p.m., Kennedy Union Boll Theatre.

For more information on University offerings for Black History Month, call Kathleen Henderson at (513) 229-3634.

Sonya Robinson



The Rev. Joseph Davis, S.M.



The University of Dayton

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The Ebony Heritage Singers

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